

# IMPLEMENTING THE NEURO ARTS INTO YOUR THERAPY PRACTICE

**Rus Devorah (Darcy) Wallen, LCSW, ACSW, CIMHP**

Engaging our clients in creative activities and therapies, collectively known as the Neuro Arts, can significantly enhance their mental and physical health by activating the brain's natural capacity for healing, self-expression, and growth. These activities are rooted in the understanding that creative engagement fosters emotional regulation, stress reduction, and neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to adapt and change. As therapists and practitioners, encouraging clients to explore art, music, movement, writing, or nature-based practices can complement traditional therapy by offering additional outlets for processing emotions, building resilience, and cultivating joy. Whether facilitated in sessions or pursued independently, the following diverse options empower clients to integrate these beneficial practices into their daily lives, tapping into their unique talents and interests for lasting well-being.

## MUSIC-BASED ACTIVITIES

- Personal Playlists – Emotional regulation and mood management.
- Choral Singing – Social engagement and confidence-building.
- Humming – Anxiety reduction and vagus nerve stimulation.
- Rhythm Tapping – Emotional release, focus, and coordination.
- Mood Matching with Music – Identify and shift emotional states.

## ART-BASED ACTIVITIES

- Floral/Geometric Art – Mindful expression.
- Neurographic Art – Stress and anxiety processing.
- Clay Modeling – Grounding and nonverbal emotional expression.
- Daily Doodles – Creativity and relaxation.
- Collage Creation – Identity exploration and goal setting.

## MUSIC MAKING & APPRECIATION

- Interactive Music (e.g., Drumming) – Tension release, sensory engagement, and social interaction.
- Singing Familiar Songs – Mood improvement and memory recall.
- Guided Listening with Visualization – Stress reduction and focus.
- Instrument Improvisation – Self-expression and creativity.

## WRITING & JOURNALING

- Gratitude Journal – Positivity and reframing.
- Verbal Journaling – Affirmation and self-expression.
- Morning Pages – Clearing mental clutter.
- Letter Writing – Emotional processing.
- "What Went Well" Journal – Gratitude and optimism.

## IMPLEMENTING THE “NEURO ARTS” INTO YOUR PRACTICE

### MOVEMENT-BASED ACTIVITIES

- Expressive Dance – Emotional release and reconnection.
- Walking Meditation – Stress relief and mindfulness.
- Tai Chi Flow – Relaxation and balance.
- Mirror Movement – Trust-building and attunement.
- Body Mapping – Sensory and emotional awareness.

### SENSORY-BASED ACTIVITIES

- Nature Sound Bath – Relaxation and grounding.
- Sensory Exploration Kits – Grounding and self-soothing.
- Guided Imagery – Trauma recovery and calm.
- Aromatherapy – Relaxation and mood uplift.
- Play & Humor – Stress relief and emotional resilience.

### COUPLES THERAPY

- Joint Painting – Collaboration and nonverbal expression.
- Co-Created Playlist – Emotional connection through music.
- Mirror Movement – Physical empathy.
- Partner Poetry – Emotional sharing.
- Shared Sensory Experiences – Mindful connection.

### FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- Family Collage – Shared goals and memories.
- Group Storytelling – Teamwork and creativity.
- Interactive Drumming – Unity through rhythm.
- Family Dance-Off – Playful tension relief.
- Collaborative Lego or Puzzle – Teamwork and communication.

### GRIEF WORK

- Memory Scrapbooking – Honoring loved ones.
- Guided Safe-Place Visualization – Comfort and grounding.
- Music for Mourning – Emotional processing.
- Personal Memory Box – Tangible keepsake storage.
- Nature Pattern Drawings – Mindful awareness of life cycles.

### TRAUMA RECOVERY

- Neurographic Art – Externalizing emotions.
- Sensory Toolkit – Grounding tools for calm.
- Trauma Narrative Writing – Processing experiences.
- Guided Imagery with Protection – Safety visualization.
- Therapeutic Drumming – Energy release and empowerment.